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# THE LABAN ART OF MOVEMENT GUILD MAGAZINE

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## OFFICERS OF THE GUILD

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M. Bergin (Editor)
D. Hubbard
J. Leedham-Green

# EDITORIAL

(*N.B.*: *Before beginning to read this, provide yourself with pencil and paper*).

Scene: A room in an Education Office somewhere in England. The Appointments Sub-Committee is interviewing a young Guild Member for a teaching post.

Characters : Young Guild Member ; members of Interviewing Panel, including local Education Officer, prospective Head Teacher, elderly female Committee member, elderly, military-looking male ditto.

Ed. Off : "I see from your application form that you would like to teach dancing."

Y.G.M. : "Yes, I should like to."

H.T. : "I suppose you mean Folk Dancing ?"

Y.G.M. : "Er - - no, not really."

Ed. Off. : "Then you mean Ballet ?"

Y.G.M.: "Well, no." (Pause). "I'm interested in Modern Dance."

E.F.C.M.: (Booms): "Are you referring to BALLROOM dancing?"

Y.G.M.: "Oh, no! It's . . . the Art of Movement."

E.M.L.M. (heartily): "Oh, I see! Physical Jerks, eh?"

Y.G.M.: "Not exactly."

H.T. (sudden inspiration): "You let the children express themselves?"

Y.G.M.: "Yes, and also help them to experience different movement qualities . . . ." (The interview continues.)

Most of us have had experiences similar to the foregoing. For Interviewing Panel, read Business Executive, shrewd but unimaginative; Theatrical Producer, interested mainly in "teeth and legs" or "classical"; Member of the Medical Profession, in a hurry and sceptical; one's colleagues in school or college, one's relatives and friends, polite but incredulous; or any member of the Great British Public, good-humouredly tolerating one's peculiar ideas as long as he is not expected to subscribe to them himself.

Attempts at explanation too often result in one-sided misconceptions. The Art of Movement has been variously misinterpreted; it is a new system of physical exercises based on "the eight efforts"; a new kind of dancing with no discernible form or technique; a type of Time and Motion Study; the exhibitionist's delight; an esoteric cult or a new religion.

We may smile at these quaint ideas: we cannot but admit that their existence reveals a very real and urgent problem. How are we, the members of the Laban Art of Movement Guild, to express in a few words, understandable by all, the aims for which we work?

At the recent Annual General Meeting this problem was mentioned, and Miss Ullmann asked everyone present to attempt this task, and send the result to the Publications Committee so that a symposium might be made and published in the next issue of the Magazine. In order that our symposium may be both as fully representative and as

comprehensive as possible, we suggest to every Guild member, in particular to YOU, who are now reading this, that you make this task your Easter holiday "homework." Not only will you find that your own ideas are thereby clarified, but you will be making your own unique and personal contribution towards the furtherance of Mr. Laban's work.

(*This is where you need the paper and pencil*).

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## SUMMARY OF WORK DONE BY THE GUILD COUNCIL FROM FEBRUARY 1955 TO FEBRUARY 1956

Council has met twice only this year, the rail strike being responsible for cancellation of a third meeting which had been arranged for June.

The following topics were the main ones discussed :—

1. *Finance.*

A statement of accounts was presented by the Treasurer at both meetings; and emphasis was again laid on the need for increased membership so that funds might be rendered adequate to allow of expansion of activities.

2. *Development Committee.*

This Committee was formed to investigate ways of establishing a connection between the Guild and the Laban Art of Movement Centre. Discussion is still proceeding, and no fixed decisions have yet been taken.

3. *Publications.*

(a) It was decided that because of increased cost of Magazine production, and because of the enduring nature of its articles, the price of the Magazine should be raised to 2s. 6d. per copy ;

(b) In order to keep members in more constant touch with Guild activities, it was decided to publish a "News Sheet" three times a year. This will be produced from different parts of the country, and the second will come from the North in May or June.

4. *Membership.*

Names of new professonal members, and all new members, were presented to Council. Names of new Affiliated Groups were also read out.

5. *Annual Conference*, 1956.

The programme was arranged.

6. *Refresher course for Professional Members at Guildry House, Brighton, October* 1955.

The programme was arranged.

7. *Conference of Educational Associations, January* 1956.

Arrangements were made for participation at this Conference.

D. M. Hornby,
J. Heath,
Hon. Secs.

# REPORT OF LECTURE DEMONSTRATION PRESENTED AT THE CONFERENCE OF EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS, JANUARY, 1956, BY THE LABAN ART OF MOVEMENT GUILD.

*Lecturers :* LISA ULLMANN, MARION NORTH, LORN PRIMROSE

THE representatives of the Art of Movement Guild gave two lectures, illustrated by movement demonstrations. The morning lecture had as its title "Education through the Art of Movement." Certain general educational principles and aims were first stated, and the following discussion showed how far the achievement of these aims can be furthered through the Art of Movement.

1. Each individual is endowed with potentialities which are of positive value to himself and to society. The aim of education is therefore to develop these potentialities within the framework of society.

2. The growth of potentialities extends into two directions, one leading to efficiency in the external world and the other to enrichment of the inner self. The process of education has to take into consideration the unity and independence of the individual's objective and subjective development.

3. The development of the individual is carried by the society in which he lives and the society benefits from the individual's sensitivity towards social conditions. Education has to promote the individual's readiness to cultivate and use his potentialities in the service of society.

4. The interaction between individual and social life requires a balanced distribution of the freedom of spontaneous action and the discipline of conscious reflection. The means of education has to satisfy man's physical, mental, emotional and spiritual needs, through conscious perception and imaginative creation.

5. Man distinguishes himself from simpler forms of life in that he seeks expression for his awareness of inner values. Education has to deepen man's quest for higher aspirations by cultivating distinctive modes of æsthetic expression.

Movement as the most fundamental function of life is more than purely mechanical motion. Movement is in the processes of action, of growth, development and change, and movement is in the states of existence, of tension, stillness and rest. The inner movement of a person is made perceptible through neuro-muscular action.

The inner self is brought into communication with the outer world by means of movement ; but also it was demonstrated how movement has an impact on the inner life of a moving person. Both this expression and impression on the self are greatly enhanced by the art of movement in which an æsthetical selection takes place, as in any art form. It was shown that movement used in everyday actions has a common denominator with expressive movement of feelings and thought. In the education of children many kinds of external stimuli

may be used to awaken the varied movement experiences. Such stimuli may be music and sound, words, colours and shapes, nature impressions, poetic images and dramatic situations. The art of movement is a mode of expression of inner experiences and intentions. In this mode of expression, shape is given to the inner experiences and intentions through selected rhythmical and formative neuro-muscular actions. The psychosomatic states of, for instance, bright awakeness as opposed to a dream-like mood, which are brought in definite combinations of neuro-muscular tension help the understanding of psychological situations and the practical tackling of problems arising from conflicts.

Movement notation is now an accepted procedure, and as essential to the developing of the art of movement as has been music script to the developing and recording of music.

The physical advantages of the art of movement training are more than purely muscular toning, and depend upon the harmonising quality of numerical order in rhythm and shape. Scales of movement have been developed which may usefully be compared with musical scales.

The practice of group movement plays an important role in the teaching of children. Discussion centred on the different possibilities of group movement involving group feeling and response, the roles of leading compared with following another's lead, and the development in this way of confidence in taking the initiative, as well as responsibilities inherent in both leading and following.

Finally, attention was drawn to the part which movement has always played in the deeper and higher aspects of man's life. The old rituals and religious dances survive in certain ceremonies even in modern life. Symbolic action is understood by all, such as reverently kneeling, the gestures of blessing or wonderment : these satisfy an inner need which is still felt in man.

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The afternoon session " The Psychological Implications of Movement " was a discussion on the assessment of a child's capacities through movement observation.

The use of movement observation and analysis in education is the opposite of its application to the needs of industry. In industry the need of the assessor is to discover how many and which of the job requirements an applicant has. In observing a child, we have no preconceived ideas of necessary abilities, but an attempt is made to establish the natural movement capacities, and such assessments naturally show a great difference in the movement potentialities of different children. Some potentialities are developed better than others, and some are lacking altogether. The main aim in education is to help towards the balanced use of present abilities, the growth and extension of which are encouraged and fostered in the many-sided movement practice.

In order to illustrate what it is that the movement observer will look for, a similar challenge was given to two different people ; simple actions like opening a book, putting on a coat, pouring out a glass of

water were used, and from the direct observation comparative results were seen. Both people achieved the task, but each in her own distinctive way. One would be much quicker than the other, one took a very direct pathway towards the object, while the other was more roundabout and flexible, and so on. Examples of a page of observations were shown, made in a shorthand specially designed for this purpose.

It is not necessary or desirable that every child in a class should have such a detailed movement report and assessment made. Such assessments are usually made when there are any special needs or difficulties, when suitable treatment and training are advised. The assessment itself is no more than a diagnosis after which clearly indicated help can be given. At the adolescent level, such assessments are useful to assist vocational guidance, not for a specific job, but for a certain category of work in which the adolescent's personality will find the right scope for his general capacities.

Two complete assessments were then read in order to show how far conclusions can be drawn from the observations. The first was of a boy of eight years who was observed during a general experimental session in a primary school. This child was found to have an unbalanced movement make-up to such a degree that it seemed unlikely that he could be leading a normal healthy life. In later discussion with the Headmaster, such was found to be the case, and in fact the boy had been referred to the educational psychologist for help. The second example was a boy of seventeen, who had asked for vocational guidance. With his comparatively rich movement make-up it was found that a wide range of opportunities would be open to him, and advice and recommendations were made, as well as advice for the developing of certain traits which were inhibiting his development.

A further use of observation which was mentioned was for the determining of group characteristics. The factor which is mainly to be considered in group observation is the curious blending of the expressions of several people. The sum of individual assessments will not give an indication as to the common behaviour when the individuals are grouped together. The blendings of expressions follow certain rules by which an over-stress of a definite element results. As an example, it could be mentioned that the individual weakness of the members of a group can conglomerate into a common brutality or mass hysteria. But there are also qualities which are of positive value for the individual as well as for the group or society, which can find a seemingly unexpected increase, such as enthusiasm, courage or enterprise.

In conclusion it can be said that the practice of movement, and so also of the art of movement, offers a means for purposeful educational guidance. The pre-condition is that the manager, educator, or trainer of people has a sufficient insight and practical experience into the observation, assessment and handling of the psychological implications of movement.

# THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE 1956

## SECRETARIES' REPORT

The February Conference, held, as for the past two years, at the Art of Movement Centre, Addlestone, was attended by the record number of seventy-two members. Five others had registered, but were unfortunately prevented by illness from coming, and a number of other members sent apologies for absence and good wishes for the success of the gathering.

The Conference opened well with a practical session taken by Diana Jordan, and this was followed by the Laban lecture, given again, to our intense pleasure, by Mr. Laban himself.

The Annual General Meeting took place in the afternoon, at which the chief item of interest was, perhaps, the contribution of £10 from those present towards the financing of film-making at the Art of Movement Centre, a project for which, it is felt, there is a great need at the present time.

After dinner we had a very interesting evening: Joan Cox gave us a delightful dance recital, Ann Hutchinson followed with an account of some of her work in connection with the Dance Notation Bureau of New York, and Elsie Palmer told us about her experiences with the training of teachers in Ontario, and her travels in Canada and U.S.A. last summer. A fuller account of these is given elsewhere.

Sunday's programme began with a session taken by Lisa Ullmann, in which a short study was learnt, and the last part of the programme was a group dance led by Sylvia Bodmer on the theme, "The Moon and the Stars," to Debussy's "Clair de Lune."

All the practical sessions were held in the new Saltarium, and many members had the exciting experience of dancing in this lovely room for the first time.

The Conference ended with a very warm vote of thanks to all present for their part in making the week-end such a happy one, and a special "Thank-you" was extended to Miss Ullmann for her kind hospitality.

## LABAN LECTURE, 1956

I suppose it was a very great moment in the life of our race when they realised that there was something to think about movement, not in the sense of organisers of thought and logic but in thinking in terms of movement. Two currents live in man, the organisation of inner movement and that of outer thinking, or of becoming aware of the deeper content of life. In practical action these two currents usually marry quite happily and play together in movement practice, in play, dance and exercise. When I said awareness of these facts was a happy "moment" in mankind's history, it was a moment which extended over thousands of years. We have written documents as much as three thousand years old showing that the art of movement was discovered long ago. This was in the East, especially China, where people had a wonderful sense of play, and this is what I want to stress here: man has recognized that this play,

not playing about, but organised play, has a deep connection with a particular mental trait in man. Animals also play but their play is instinctive. Of course we don't know what animals think; all we see is that they play in practical preparation for life. A cat learns to chase and catch a mouse when it plays with a ball of wool, and so on. There are innumerable examples. This play of animals is based on instinct, but in man these instincts are more or less forgotten. Because of this man has developed an inner quality. There is nothing so helpless as a newborn child, and there is nothing so clever and agile as a newborn animal. A child plays, but by intuition not by instinct. Time is short or I could say a lot about the difference between instinct and intuition, but I will just pick out a few of the experiences I have gained during life to tell you what I know about organised play.

Art of movement does not consist of jumping about more or less happily—or unhappily—any more than music consists of shouting to show enjoyment, or poetry of just putting words together anyhow. There are definite rules of play. Man has found that these are not rigid rules but something living in Nature; briefly, the free rules governing rhythm.

Sixty years ago when I was a young lad living on the borders of Czechoslovakia and Hungary, and climbing about in the mountains, I already called the practice of this natural rhythm the art of movement, in distinction from dancing, drama and so on. One wonderful morning when I was in one of these high peaks my whole being was suddenly uplifted. The sun was rising, mist was in the valleys, there was no sound of animals so high up, and below was a big forest through which I had just climbed. In this incredibly clear air I suddenly saw all the mountain peaks in a rhythmical way. It was a rhythmic movement in my mind because these mountains were rigid, but as I saw the clouds passing slowly over the landscape, and a little ripple in the lake at the bottom of the mountain, I said to myself: "How can I convey all that I feel to other people?" This was all so strong and beautiful, and when one feels so deeply one must try to communicate it to others. But how? In words, in music, in paint? But it was all too rich for that. There was only one way, and it was my way: to show what I really feel deep in my body when my arms lift themselves up, when I try to press, and my whole body feels an enjoyable tension. What was it I did when I ran up a little hill, and then up another, and plunged into a mountain lake? I MOVED. I moved for sheer joy in all this beauty and order; for I saw order in it all. I saw something which is absolutely right, something which had to be so. And I thought, there is only one way I can express all this. When my body and soul move together they create a rhythm of movement; and so I danced. But when I tried to convey this to people it was awful. They were too stiff to follow my movements. At that time I had a small group of friends with whom I enjoyed music and poetry and dancing. I felt I could train them and so I tried to increase my knowledge and capacity to communicate, so that I could awaken this deeper experience in others.

I became profoundly interested in people's movements, in their work, their acting, their dancing. I looked around me and saw the handsome Czechoslovak women carrying bricks and wood and water up-hill on their heads. They were so straight and natural, their gait was admirably harmonious. I thought they looked like figures on an Egyptian bas-relief, or in a mediaeval picture. Then I saw workmen who reminded me of drawings of the cave-man. All their movements were well organised, but it was unconscious ; it was in their blood.

I walked over a bridge, past a forest of enormous old trees, to the Hungarian villages on the Danube. Here I saw dances on the village green, but nothing like the Hungarian dances you see on the stage ! The men begin to dance and are later joined by the women. They begin quietly, nothing much happens, and the dances are developed gradually, until even the smallest body vibrations are full of rhythm.

Then I crossed the Danube to Czechoslovakia and saw dances in the Slav tradition, languid, with more inner fire and less virile elasticity than the Hungarian dances. Many of these dances are occupational, like the Mazurka, which symbolises the sowing of corn—a working gesture transformed into an artistic rhythm.

I went to Vienna and became acquainted with the dances of the West—American girls doing high kicks—and wondered if this could possibly be the art of movement of the future. But I tried to imagine these girls climbing mountain peaks and swimming in the ice-cold lakes, and then dancing there spontaneously, and I concluded that the future of movement lay surely elsewhere.

I had now seen the working folk in the villages, the Hungarian and Slav peasant dances, and I had also observed my friends. What had all this to do with the nature of movement ? Work is done with an object, so movement is adjusted to a practical end, and it was beautiful and perfect. What did the peasants do when they danced ? They opened themselves to let something from deep inside come out, out of their unconscious. They made expressive movements which were also communicative, and it is a curious thing that this sort of movement always becomes more alive in company with others. What did other people do ? Some of them put up an act, they imitated a human-being or an ideal, just as a child will imitate an animal. Imitative movement is very important and is often used to put across rather profound ideas.

An imitative wave can be seen passing through history, in painting, sculpture, music and dance. At one time people moved freely, externally : an epoch of dancing and movement. There were other periods when they imitated saints and heroes. I grew up in Victorian times when people behaved pompously. They were stiff and 'proper', and we are a bit pompous still.

Let us think also of Byzantine painting, of the wonderful mosaics of the late Roman Empire, when all figures were very straight, the one desire being to show the erectness of the human carriage, in contrast to that of our Simian ancestors. The spirit always strives upwards and imitation often shows high aspiration.

Let us look at work, expression and at imitation in the higher sense (we might call it representation), and see how we may distinguish

them. The inner state you represent is quite different from the inner state which you spontaneously express. A wonderful picture of movement awakens in the mind in training efficient working movement, expressive movement and imitative bearing.

Look at games and what do you discover ? They are governed by a deep sense of fair play, of justice. Man taboos violence and cheating, and so all competitive movements are made in a way which says : " Be fair." Beauty comes out mainly in the world of dancing ; beauty and harmony and justice can be seen in movement play.

Look also at drama and what do you see ? You see life as pain and effort as well as joy : this causes dramatic conflict. And what is the third quality seen in drama ? It is truth, the truth of life. Life is a conflict between ugliness and beauty, between justice and injustice, between pain and enjoyment.

But man is weak and has always been busy remodelling his ideas of beauty and justice and truth, and so the history of the art of movement shows a development of the highest aspirations of man. Though keen observers must always have existed there is as yet no written history of movement observation, but we are now aware of the three fundamental types of movement : working, expressive and imitative, seeking beauty, justice and truth, and this is a promising progress.

If you believe in this art to which we are all devoted, something awakens in the inner recesses of your mind so that you recognise that there is beauty, there is justice and there is truth. Let us try to develop this art to such a peak that it can spread everywhere and serve the whole community. Then the drive, ambition and devotion to ideals which live naturally in us will all be enriched by the cultivation of movement.

## MEMBERS' ITEMS

### I. Original Dances by Joan Cox

Joan Cox enchanted us with a programme of very varied dances of her own composition. We were absorbed in following her fluent change of level and in appreciating her mastery of turn and backward movement.

" Queen of the Night " was danced with regal poise and serenity, but left one with a sense of spheres wheeling in space. "Snake" or " Three-headed Serpent " which followed showed us a writhing sinuous earthbound creature whose jewelled hands were used most effectively as twin heads.

The " Three Little Dances " to music by Ibert were quite delightful: two were gay and frolicsome, one more meditative, and these showed the spontaneous open-hearted Joan that we know and love well.

"Tabooed Tribeswoman" was an ambitious dance requiring a high degree of inner tension. The recurring movement themes in this dance were most telling.

Finishing with a happy touch, Joan danced "The Pobbie who has no Toes" in an amusing costume of red and black, finished off with ears and toe-caps of scarlet flannel. She danced to the spoken

rhyme with a nice use of stresses and in an easy manner which had us all laughing and applauding with great appreciation. For this delightful and versatile display we should like to record our sincere thanks.

**II. Talk on Labanotation by Ann Hutchinson**

Many of us have struggled with Notation at some time or another, and a few have mastered it, but the fact that five-year-olds can use the symbols and enjoy them was an eye-opener to the majority, I think. Ann Hutchinson is President of the Dance Notation Bureau in New York and has herself worked with old and young on Labanotation. This year in England she is working particularly in connection with Ballet groups as well as individuals, and hopes to use this as an avenue for extending a knowledge of the work to many more people. She told us that with children in the United States and in England she found the introduction of a tangible symbol at the right moment both interesting and stimulating, and she explained how she uses large cut-outs on the floor, and introduces the children to books suitable to their age. These they use like picture books, linking the pictured symbol with the movement done in class. She stressed the point that the whole training must be an integration of movement experience, so that the symbols mean something specific and are immediately alive. She has a most vital interest in this work, and looks on it as one of Laban's children, an offspring of which he may well be proud and which may help to bind together the many different forms of movement.

(A variety of Labanotation Publications can be obtained from John Watkins, Publishers and Booksellers, 21, Cecil Court, Charing Cross Road, .C.2, including "Labanotation" by Ann Hutchinson, and "Dance Techniques and Study" by such well known authorities as Martha Graham, Hanya Holm, George Balanchine, and Doris Humphrey.)

**III. Talk by Elsie Palmer about her visit to Canada.**

Elsie Palmer completed a wonderful evening with her vivid talk about the visit she paid to Canada last summer. In her inimitable way she switched us from the sublime to the ridiculous, and kept us entertained throughout her talk. The Department of Education for Ontario had invited her to take a course in Modern Methods of Movement Training with the teachers of the 5-14-year-old age group in Hamilton, Ontario. Her decision to accept at extremely short notice, followed by her difficulty in getting a berth and in locating her boat downstream when port officials assured her it had sailed, were matched by her adventures on the other side of the Atlantic. Landing on the Heights of Abraham when she should have been in the middle of Quebec, and arriving back at the boat with only a few minutes to spare before it sailed again, were only two of the excitements which she experienced before meeting her group of men and women teachers.

Working in a temperature between 90 and 110 degrees, with batches of forty all day long, she taught them to find out what their bodies

could do, to think independently, and to answer the challenges first of apparatus and then of the qualities of weight, space, and time. Determined only to teach what the students saw in each other and understood, she had to use all her experience, ingenuity, knowledge and intuition to gain the co-operation of her groups and to pass over to them all she possibly could in five weeks. We know that she would not spare herself, but it speaks much for the cleverness of her method that one of the men could say at the end: "I've never worked so hard for anyone in my life, and you haven't done a thing!"

The twelve days' holiday that followed was begun with a journey across to the Pacific coast in a car which had to be delivered at the other side, a neat way of travelling a long distance at a minimum cost. We were able to share her enjoyment in the interesting and beautiful places that she visited, by means of the coloured slides which she projected on to the wall of the studio. In between the pictures, her racy descriptions of people and experiences made her whole journey vividly alive for us.

MARIE WARD.

## COUNCIL ELECTIONS, 1956

The results of these, announced at the Annual General Meeting, are as follows :—

*Professional Members :*

Marjorie Bergin
Elsie Palmer
Gladys Stevens

*Associates :*

Frank Culver
Christine Mercer

## NEW MEMBERS

We welcome to the Guild the following new members :

*Associates*:

| | |
|---|---|
| Mr. T Bliss | London |
| Miss N. Brock | U.S.A. |
| „ M. C. Calow | Notts |
| „ M. Chambers | London |
| Mrs. E. Curry | Surrey |
| Miss P. Dunkley | Surrey |
| Mr. B. Elmhirst | London |
| Mrs. E. H. Heaton | Surrey |
| Miss D. Hubbard | Middlesex |
| „ M. N. Hunter | Surrey |
| Mr. M. Leonard | London |
| Mrs. M. McGivering | Cheshire |
| „ M. P. Mercer | Lancashire |
| Miss D. L. Midgley | Lancashire |
| Mrs. G. Morrison | Durham |
| Miss K. Patrick | Surrey |
| „ I. M. Rees | Essex |
| „ A. E. van Rooyen | S. Africa |
| Mrs. J. Salter | Lancashire |
| Miss B. Sheridan | Surrey |
| „ J. Tomlinson | Surrey |

*Affiliated Groups*:

| | |
|---|---|
| I. M. Marsh College of Physical Education | Liverpool |
| C. F. Mott Training College ... ... ... | Liverpool |
| Worcestershire Dance Group ... ... | Worcestershire |

Congratulations to the following :—

*Sectional Members*:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Art : | Suzanne Kabitz ... ... | Germany |
| Education : | Marion North ... ... ... | Surrey |

*Graduates*:

| | |
|---|---|
| Joan English ... ... ... ... ... | Derbyshire |
| Sheila McGivering ... ... ... ... | Lancashire |
| Sophia Williams ... ... ... ... | Bristol |

## RECREATIVE DANCE GROUPS

In reply to the January News Sheet, the following information may be of interest to members, and we hope that they will draw the attention of enquirers to leaders below. If you feel that you could assist any of these people by offering administrative or clerical help please get in touch with them.

May I thank all those who have replied, including those who cannot at the moment offer teaching help. More replies would be welcome !

MARION NORTH.

**Adult Groups already in action:**

LIVERPOOL : Junior Dance Circle.
Hilary Corlett, I.M. Marsh College of P.E., Barkhill Road, Liverpool, 17.

HAMPSHIRE : Recreative Dance Group.
Eugenie Fraser, Glenbuck Cottage, Crawley, nr. Winchester, Hants.

**Leaders willing to start new Adult Classes or Groups:**

LONDON :
Hilda Brumof & Lilian Harmel, 37, Ferncroft Avenue, N.W.3.
Joan Carrington, 92, Portland Place, W.1.
Janet Erridge, 28, Spring Grove, Loughton, Essex.
Joan Leedham-Green, 49, Belsize Avenue, N.W.3.
Geraldine Stephenson, 94C, Cromwell Road, S.W.7.
Mary Webber, 313, West Wycombe Road, High Wycombe, Bucks.
Audrey Wethered, 51, Queensdale Road, W.11.
Sylvia Williams, 41, Bathurst Mews, Hyde Park, W.2.

EASTBOURNE :
Myrtle James, Chelsea College of P.E., Denton Road, Eastbourne, Sussex.

MANCHESTER :

Toni & Gerry Bagley, Modern Dance Productions, 361A, Oxford Road, Manchester, 13.
Mary Elding, 118, Palatine Road, Manchester, 20.

HULL :

Margaret Brown, 12, Strathearn Street, Newland, Hull.

LEICESTER :

Vi Bruce, City of Leicester Training College.

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME :

Shirley More, County Stafford Training College, Nelson Hall, Stafford.

**Leaders willing to take Children's Classes:**

BIRMINGHAM :

Janet Probert, Flat No. 4, Central Fire Station, Corporation Street, Birmingham, 4.

EASTBOURNE :

Janet Langridge, 6, Whitley Road, Eastbourne, Sussex.

LIVERPOOL :

Doreen Morris, 5, Sedgemoor Road, Liverpool, 11.
Betty Redfern, C. F. Mott Training College, The Hazels, Prescot, Lancs.

LONDON :

Sally Reder, 230, Makepeace Mansions, Highgate, N.6.
Audrey Wethered, as above.

MANCHESTER :

Toni and Gerry Bagley, as above.
Mary Elding, as above.

S.W. MIDDLESEX :

Marion North and Students, Art of Movement Studio, Woburn Hill, Addlestone, Surrey.

YORKSHIRE, ILKLEY District :

Pat Dunkley, Threeways, Goldsborough, near Knaresborough.

**Children's Classes already working::**

LONDON :

Lilian Harmel and Hilda Brumof, at the Katherine Low Settlement, 108, Battersea High Street, S.W.11. Girls and boys, 4—6 years, Saturday mornings. Girls, 7—11 years, Tuesdays, 5—6.30 p.m.

## THE ARTS IN THERAPY

*(Reprinted from the "Journal of the Association of Occupational Therapists")*

### Art and Movement

Many years of experience of art classes and movement classes for patients (see "The Use of Specified Movement in the Treatment of the Mentally Ill", Journal of the Association of Occupational Therapists, July, 1949 and "A Contribution to Treatment in Psychiatry" Journal of Mental Science, Vol. XCIX No. 415, April, 1953) led us to discuss the possibility of an added therapeutic value if the same group of patients could be given both art and movement, the subject matter of the two classes being closely related.

This was tried for a period of about six months with a group of twelve patients, half men and half women. The group included cases of the following types :—chronic schizophrenics ; epileptics ; anxiety states ; depressions ; hysterics and obsessionals. A painting class lasting two hours was held on one day and a movement class, lasting about one and a half hours, on the next. Each class was aided in a number of ways by the teacher of the other and notes were compared afterwards.

The aims of the treatment were to reconcile the patients' inner life to the world of reality by feeling, seeing, hearing and experiencing beauty, and to establish a group sense in its highest form, i.e. the sense of working together towards a creative achievement.

### Methods

In the painting class the patients all painted a given subject. This unified the group and gave its members a sense of security and enough discipline without too much restriction. There was plenty of scope for individual interpretation and the choice of medium was usually left to the patients. Water colour, pastels, crayon, charcoal, pen and ink and pencil and, in some cases, oil paints were available. Flowers were the first studies as they presented fewer technical difficulties and were not so frightening to the patients. Later, landscape was attempted in the grounds, patients introducing buildings or figures as they were so inclined. The next stage was drawing from life and the patients took turns with the staff or students to pose. This gave them an understanding of the difficulties encountered by artist and model. Still life groups made a variety when the weather was poor, or when a model was not handy, and the patients soon gained enough confidence to plan and arrange their own groups of objects. Drawing from memory, imaginative paintings of a given subject, short action poses and living groups were all tried in due course. After each class the patients arranged their pictures and discussions took place on composition, style and observation, etc. The class usually started with a brief outline by the teacher of the best use to make of the various materials, and often ended, if time permitted, with the study of a Dutch master or a French impressionist painter, etc. Visits to contemporary art exhibitions were also much appreciated.

It was interesting to note that with the very inhibited patient, or

the one with no experience, or very little natural gift, the same reactions were found as in a group of normal students. With the exception of the very advanced schizophrenics, the drawings of beginners showed the same difficulty in analysing the subject, putting down the essential points and discarding the irrelevant. In a mental hospital the taking of an art class on constructive lines presents much the same problem as any other form of Occupational Therapy except that with painting the patient has a wider field and is apt to show a deeper emotional re-action to his work. Expert guidance by the therapist in either field is required to bring about the desired results.

In teaching movement one has to teach nearly all its aspects at once. One theme always involves another in this way :—the subject of the preceding day's art class becomes a starting point for the subsequent Movement Class, e.g. "placing a subject in its frame" was discussed and worked on at one art class. In the movement class which followed it, the group started by exploring the space around them by "drawing" frames with parts of the body in the three dimensions of space, and then, with the help of a partner, finding poses which did or did not fill the frame adequately. This subject could have been developed in many ways leading to group dance with its dramatic interrelations ; body technique ; phrasing and climax and many other themes. In this case, however, the patients discovered that the time element in movement required the flow of one movement into another, none of which filled the frame at any given moment ; they found that an empty space or half empty space created some kind of a tension which in its turn created another incident and so they began to learn the thrills of choreography. Classes of this kind led us on to simple dance compositions, dance mimes to music, short dramatic scenes and charades. The group was nearly always divided into two so that one half could watch, criticise, and help their fellows in their explorations. This discussion and ruthless criticism did much to integrate the group, and when they made up a dance-mime and presented it to an audience they brought many clear and lively ideas into the production and performed with confidence and sparkle.

One cannot consciously link movement to art while one is teaching as this makes the class laboured and detracts from the value of movement as an art in its own right. The study of any art must flow steadily and develop naturally and although there are many fundamentals common to all arts, like the root of a tree, the branches must reach out on their own. Discussions at the end of the classes and during short rests showed how much interest the patients took in the relationship of the two arts, and it proved unnecessary to stress it during teaching. Lack of consecutive concentration and good memory, essential in the study of dance, was largely overcome by the previous exercises in the visual arts.

The points raised in these discussions may be summarised under three headings :—

(a) study of the fundamentals of art
(b) life and life group drawing
(c) presentation of work to an audience.

In (a) such things as space, flow, balance and rhythm were attempted in the art class and experienced in the movement class. In (b) the body, the way it is built and the way it moves were observed in the art class and examined and felt in the movement class. In (c) the fantasy which was fashioned into a dance production was drawn in the art class, each patient drawing himself in character and in costume, and the idea of making a picture to show to someone else so clarified their ideas and strengthened their choreographic sense that rehearsals were carried on with a marked lack of the confusion which is usual at the early stages with normal people. This gave plenty of time and energy to create really lively and amusing characters and to polish the details of each phrase.

We feel that a limitless field for experiment lies open to the doctor and the therapist where the arts are concerned, and that it is not being as fully explored as it might be. Through our research, small and unscientific as it may seem, we grow more than ever convinced that where a patient has been given a creative means of expression (and to do this he *must* be trained in sufficient understanding, technique and discipline) whether it be through music, modelling, movement or painting, his troubled spirit will have found a sense of harmony and healing.

MARJORIE COLLINGDON, M.A.O.T.
CHLOE GARDNER, M.A.O.T.

## ON DANCING FOR CHILDREN

THE Wizard appears . . . A thrill of interest passes through the audience of junior children, like a summer breeze in a field of corn. Guided by pointed fingers and numerous small voices, the Wizard makes his way from the back of the hall onto the stage where a "Little Girl" has cried herself asleep over her doll which broke whilst she was dancing. He now repairs it by his magic. In silent suspense the audience watch as the "Little Girl" awakens and dances in sheer amazement and joy at finding her dolly well again.

The artists are aware, through the darkness of the hall and the lights on the stage, of a rapid succession of movements and attitudes of the children in the audience. They have leaned eagerly forward ; they have clutched their fingers to their mouths in surprise ; they have laughed, cried, shouted and stood up excitedly waving their hands in a multitude of gestures ; they have flopped back into their seats happy and relaxed. They have lived, participated and been absorbed. Only the dancer who has succeeded in entering into and sharing the dream world of the child can say what a uniquely rewarding experience it is to dance for children.

Children the world over are interested in movement and colour, but every audience is different, sometimes absorbed, sometimes excited, quiet or enthusiastic. The reactions differ vastly. How then does a child audience differ from an adult one ? With adults there is usually a certain reserve, a waiting-to-see ; whilst with children a definite wanting-to-share, to participate with the artist can be felt, provided the performance stimulates the imagination and creative fantasy of the child.

Many people do not realise that children are the strongest critics. Anything half done will not suffice and one would be surprised at their detailed observations. For instance, some boys, stimulated by a dance solo "The Battle and Defeat of Napoleon" were, during play time, striding about in Napoleonic attitudes, signalling armies and thoroughly enjoying the movement. Others have translated their observations in painting and drawing of such characters as "Sambo the Black Boy," the fantastic broom from "The Sorcerer's Apprentice" or the clowns in "Circus Story."

In several schools, teachers after seeing a performance become interested in modern dance and are now wanting to introduce this in their schools. It is important (and this draws a parallel with teaching movement), that children have a natural appetite for contrasts, crescendo, decrescendo and healthy rhythms. Thus, in launching a programme, a good beginning proves to be the gay peasant dance "Fiesta" with characteristic down-to-earth movements, wide gestures, plenty of humour and vitality; the next dance may have strong qualities such as punching, pressing and slashing, followed by a girl in "A New Party Dress" showing the opposite effort-qualities of lightness and flexibility. One should be aware of contrasting characters in a dance-drama (a story is always very popular with children), contrasting themes, occupational or taken from nature, humorous, fantastic or dramatic. Thus the child will be stimulated in different aspects of the dance.

A child is an artist in the broadest and truest sense of the word. It has an inborn appreciation of beauty and sincerity, as those who have come into contact with child art will know. It is only later that this sensitivity may be numbed, very often under the influences of certain forms of self-conscious, sophisticated art which belong to the adult world and which place undue reliance upon the drug of technical tricks. Indeed, such glittering star-spangled complexities of technical tricks and crescendos cause one's eyes to be blinded, one's ears dimmed, and one's senses numbed, and no longer can one remember how to appreciate the beauty of a simple movement. Technique for technique's sake alone does not impress an audience of children as many first-class acrobatic and stylistic artists know to their cost.

Good art of many kinds, including literature, music and painting, uses well-defined movement-images which crystallise everyday-life experiences into a single form, shape or archetype. If a movement-image describes a certain character, all supporting steps, gestures and transitory movements should be beautifully simplified into the poetry of the dream world which is dance. Children are exceptionally receptive to these movement-images which fire their imagination and inspire them to create for themselves. In a well-composed dance-programme children see more than mere movements to be imitated; they see also the ideas behind the dancers' movements and will later proceed to develop these in their own way rather than slavishly copy. Indeed a child will only copy when it feels insecure and needs an example. Left alone, it will create for itself and embellish what is

shown, for it has a naive and lovable faith in the strength of its own art.

Choice of music and colour in lights and costume-design must of course blend with the movement, otherwise the right balance will be lost and the children become bored and restless. Here also is the connection with other subjects: Art, Music and Drama as well as movement are brought into play.

Boys and girls differ in appreciation. Strange as it may seem, one of the dances with most appeal to the girls is a boys' dance "Allegro Barbaro" with the theme of envy and power, which terminates, as envy must, in defeat for both. Another item, "Man and Woman." symbolising harmony and peacefulness through wide, gliding, spatial movements has deeply moved senior girls.

Boys usually prefer dramatic subjects, a story or broad humour. The idea that boys do not like dance is absolute nonsense. Provided the right kind of dancing is offered, boys show a very keen delight in dancing. This was illustrated in a mixed grammar school where only the girls were allowed to attend the performance, although the boys were quite enthusiastic and wanting to do some of this work themselves.

For Juniors a special kind of approach is necessary, for a young child prefers to live the dance when watching. In "Magic Journey" a Wizard takes the children on a journey of dance and mime which involves magic spells by the children in movement and speech. The whole success of the show depends on the child's participation. Thus, sharing in the play becomes an experience of mysterious excitement through which the dance can be understood in its inmost significance.

Modern Dance Productions: "Mimic Dance Theatre," in the last two years, has played to over one hundred audiences, adults and children, in all types of schools, halls and theatres and perhaps the greatest truth in dancing for children is that sincerity and the spirit of participation alone win through. J.A. AND G.B.

## RECREATIVE DANCING IN THE MOVEMENT CHOIR

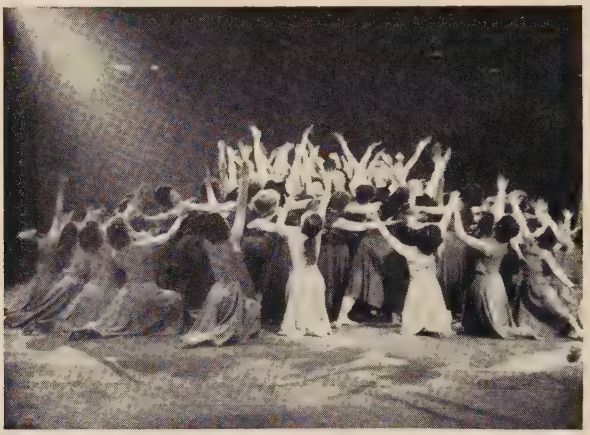
*(Reprinted from "Physical Recreation" January, 1956, by kind permission of the Editor.)*

"MOVEMENT Choir? What is it?" you ask me. Of course, you immediately think of a Singing Choir and I am glad you do. Some of you may belong to one, and all of you will at one time or another have listened to the power and sweetness which massed human voices can produce. Song is in all of us. We love to hum a little tune now and then or to burst into song in company with others. Throughout the ages scores of tunes have accumulated which have often given inspiration to the works of great composers.

It is, however, not only song and music in which man's feelings are echoed. His imagination and sensibility have driven him to create through whatever means came to hand. So he began to paint and to carve, to embroider and to build and to produce and embellish things in a way far exceeding the ordinary needs of everyday life.

**Expression to Gaiety and Sadness**

But while man found pleasure in ornamenting his tools and the objects of his environment, he felt the urge to give expression to his gaiety and sadness in dance, in music and in words. In doing so, he



*At the 'Festival of Movement and Dance' (photo by Henry Grant)*

discovered that not only had he liberated himself from those strange feelings swaying him between hope and despair, but he also found that he could communicate with his fellow-beings and receive strength and inspiration through this.

I should like to relate my own experience. Perhaps I am one of the lucky ones, because dance has been a part of my life as long as I can think. My parents must have been very 'progressive' indeed at that time. They allowed me to join a small dance-circle, which was conducted not by a dancing teacher but by a singer, the wife of an artist. This, as I see it now, was fortunate because we were not burdened by learning dance steps only, but our imagination to dance was roused. I was by far the youngest in this group, only five years old. The next youngest was eleven and all the others, about ten of them, who came twice weekly for their recreation, were between seventeen and twenty-five. I remember our creating many dances of varying moods : pastoral and peasant-like, fantastic and dreamy, playful and active. We usually danced to music and over the years many festivities were organised in conjunction with student-artists when we showed our dances. There was certainly not much technique but a great deal of enthusiasm.

At my parents' house in Berlin it was usual when friends or relatives came, to pool the various artistic talents amongst them, thus providing the evening's entertainment. We saw pictures, heard music, listened to poetry and, of course, I had to dance. At one of these occasions—I was then already fifteen or sixteen years old—an uncle of

mine, who was a well-known psychologist, saw me dance and all he said was : ' You must go to Laban and learn something about dancing.'

**Classes at a Laban School**

At that time, my work at school prevented me from going to any dance courses for some years, but as soon as I finished school and had also completed a commercial training, I joined classes for laymen twice weekly at a Laban school of the art of movement. This was great fun. I learned how to use my body in turning, jumping, leaping, how bendings and stretchings created beautiful lines and patterns in space, and how strong, gentle, sudden, slow, large or small movements can produce the most exciting rhythms in the flow of movement.

Everything was very different from the gymnastic classes we had had at school and in the gym. club—or keep-fit club as we would call it today—which I had joined for a little while. We, too, did physical exercises and trained our bodies carefully but our objective in doing this was not so much the achievement of bodily skill, as the preparing of the body as an instrument for dancing. I only learned through more extensive study that a certain basic movement training was common to both dancers and gymnasts, however different their ultimate aims might be.

**A Change of Approach**

Much research has been done in this field during the last half-century and we owe it mainly to Rudolf Laban, whose life work has been to study human movement, that we are able to discern and stimulate fundamental movement impulses other than for purely functional purposes. Consequently, the relationship between learner and teacher became different. The old drill methods could no longer be employed when one recognised that a creative response of each individual in a group helped to heighten the general atmosphere of enjoyment. This change of approach helped to open the doors for everyone to find

*From the choral dance play 'Agamemnon's Death' Hamburg Movement Choir 1924*

recreation in physical activities and in dancing. It was no longer the trained professional alone who had access to the golden rules of his craft, but everyone was enabled to enjoy the recreative power of movement.

Soon after joining the Laban school I was asked whether I would like to participate in the 'Movement Choir.' Until then I had not

*Dance with percussion (photo by courtesy of Surrey and South London Picture Service, Surbiton)*

heard of such a thing and found out that this was a body of people--men and women—who gathered regularly to create, study and perform group-dance compositions for their own enjoyment and recreation. I was told it was a social activity and I wondered in what way it would differ from ballroom dancing in which I had become interested. After all, in the evenings I wanted to meet friends and have some fun. I knew, of course, that the routines of ballroom steps I had learned would not be of much use, but I could not quite see how men and women would dance together other than in couples as I knew it from ballroom or folk dancing. Would I be taught the steps and movements I had to perform ? Would there be music, and what would we wear ?

**All Ages and Shapes**

You will understand my state of uncertainty before I went to join the Movement Choir for the first time. When I got there I found a hall full of people, men and women of all ages and shapes. There was a gaiety of colour, the women were dressed in tunics and the men in shorts and most of them were barefoot. The atmosphere was like that of a bee-hive with people moving here and there, jumping in the air or cowering on the floor—spinning with their feet like a top or slowly unfolding their limbs and balancing finally in an interesting position which reminded me of many a beautiful sculpture I had seen. Excited

chatter went on with people gesticulating in the air or clapping rhythms with their hands.

It looked rather like a mad-house to me but, suddenly, there were some chords on the piano and immediate silence resulted. Then I heard a male voice say : 'Let us start the saltata from the beginning.' 'Saltata ?' I asked myself. 'What on earth is that ?' But already I saw people grouping themselves, taking different positions in different parts of the room and suddenly it all began to take shape and there was order and pattern in the whole. I now understood that what I had seen so far was a preliminary practising, rather like hearing an orchestra tuning up before the conductor arrives. The Movement Choir leader and producer had given the sign and a kind of movement symphony unfolded before my eyes. There were groups of men with strong and vigorous rhythmical movements countering the women creating smoothly flowing patterns, there were dramatic moments when one group seemed to imprison and subdue another one and when finally at first a few and then more and more dancers emerged from a maze-like entanglement in a pulsating rhythm of joy and harmony.

**Saltata**

I had seen a Saltata on the dance of the four elements : fire, water, wind and earth. The expression Saltata, I learned, stood for 'group dance composition.' (Saltation, according to the Oxford Dictionary, means leaping, dancing).

Needless to say, I could hardly sit quietly on my chair, I was aching to join in the dancing and then suddenly I was called upon and I had to take the part of someone who was missing. It did not take long

*The new Saltarium, at the Lakan Art of Movement Centre, Surrey (photo by courtesy of Colin Westwood, Weybridge)*

before I felt that strange excitement which dancing together with others can give, when one is at one moment submerged in the group, carried along by the rhythm of the whole, and next moment one finds oneself the leader of a group when one's dancing has to inspire all the others.

From then onwards I became a staunch member of the Movement Choir. We worked on many choral dance-works and occasionally performed them in public. Sometimes they were choreographed by the producer and sometimes the composition of the dance arose from ideas and movements which members of the group would invent. There were themes like 'Orpheus' with music by Gluck, or 'Prometheus' with Beethoven's music, or the 'Dance of the Colours' which was partly done without music and partly with percussion accompaniment. We would work on themes concerned with the seasons such as 'Yuletide' and 'Solstice Saltatas', but often we took inspiration from contemporary life and danced such things as 'Machine Rhythms,' 'City Dwellers,' 'Work and Leisure.'

**Pure Enjoyment and Recreation**

The idea of people meeting in order to dance together and create their own dance-works for the sake of pure enjoyment and recreation was started in the first decade of this century in Nice in the South of France. Laban had shown at that time with some professional dancers his first works of the 'new dance.' The natural way of presentation, and particularly the manly style of the male dancers, inspired many of his audience to want to do something similar themselves. Men and women came to him and asked him if he would lead them to dance for their own pleasure. So the first, what was called 'laymen's dance group' came into existence.

Wherever Laban went such groups sprang up, in Switzerland, Jugoslavia, Hungary, Austria, but it was not until after the first world war that these groups were called Movement Choirs. It was the group in Hamburg, Germany, consisting of hundreds of members, which coined this title. They may have been reminded of a singing choir when in their work they learned that dancers too have their natural range of movement. Just as singers are divided into soprano, mezzo-soprano, alto voices or, on the men's side, into tenor, baritone and bass, so have dancers their particular range of bodily tension, namely : the crisp erectness and elevation of the 'high' dancer, the swinging smoothness of the 'middle' dancer and the impulsive heaviness of the 'deep' dancer.

**"Art of Movement"**

After my introduction to Laban's work through the laymen's dance classes and the Movement Choir, I decided to make the art of movement my career and I went to Laban to take a full-time training. Years later, when I came to England I established, amongst other things, the first Movement Choir in Plymouth under the auspices of the Workers' Educational Association, in the mid-thirties.

There were large numbers attending and we carried on for a number of years until in 1940 the progress of the war interrupted our

activity. The spontaneous response with which the new form of recreative dance was received showed me that also in this country, as everywhere else, people had the longing for organised creative dancing in a form which would correspond to our contemporary way of living in an industrial civilisation.

**Manchester "Dance Circle"**

Therefore, as soon as I arrived in Manchester in 1942, I joined my colleague Sylvia Bodmer, and together we founded a movement choir which we called the 'Manchester Dance Circle.' This has not only been flourishing ever since but has also given rise to the formation of many other Dance Circles up and down the country under various leaders.

For a good number of years now, Mr. Laban himself and I have been producing Choral Dance Plays and Saltatas in London. What could be more gratifying than to see so many people find obvious pleasure and recreation in an activity which lifts them out of their everyday routine and gives physical health and mental stimulus?

**"Festival of Movement and Dance"**

It is always a festive occasion when our friends come to see us, and over the years we have been able to let hundreds and hundreds share our enjoyment of creative and recreative dancing. But it was not until last March that we were able to show our work to a large public in this

*At the 'Fetsival of Movement and Dance' (photo by Douglas Elston)*

country. It was on the occasion of the Festival of Movement and Dance at Wembley Pool, organised by the Central Council of Physical Recreation. Here we performed to an audience of 8,000 a Saltata for women to music by Bizet. It was a great and unique experience for the eighty dancers of the Movement Choir, particularly when the audience spontaneously applauded the climax of the last dance just before the end.

Now, we also have a London Movement Choir, and requests from all over the country for recreative dance sessions increase daily. But there is still a shortage of leaders and producers. Many more people are needed who are not only competent teachers of dance but who are able to kindle the interest in recreative dancing in the Movement Choir.

LISA ULLMANN.

## MOVEMENT PORTRAITS

WE are all familiar with portrait paintings, and are impressed when the artist not only achieves a superficial likeness, but manages to capture something of the character or 'spirit' of the person. This summer, I heard also sound portraits, improvised and composed by someone who relates her interest in music with people. I thought, when listening to these, how closely allied are all such attempts to capture a personality in a different medium, and that what they had in common were the fundamental movement ideas. I should like to tell you of a different kind of portrait, one where the concern is not a translation into another medium, but a struggle to clarify what everyone, consciously or unconsciously, sees in others: that is an individual's own personal movement characteristics. You will know of Mr. Laban's initiating such use of movement knowledge to help personnel organisation in industry and commercial undertakings, not only selection and placement of the right man for the right job, but advice on the training each man needs to ensure his maximum happiness and efficiency on the job. Similarly, vocational guidance for young people is given through the Youth Advice Bureau.

On behalf of the Research Foundation of the Centre, I was able to arrange to make investigations into the movement characteristics of children. The quotations which follow are taken from the report made to the Centre on the progress of these investigations which are still going on.

"The desire to undertake this research originated partly from a personal desire to make a first hand study of children, in order that I might become more familiar with different age groups, not primarily from the educational point of view (which has already been extensively studied by others), but from an interest in helping the smaller number of children who are less able to adjust to their everyday life. This group would presumably include children who have been referred for treatment to the Educational Psychologists, as well as those about whom the parents or teachers feel uneasy because of behaviour or progress. Secondly, the request from the parent of a boy of seven years of age, asking if we could help him through assessment of his

son to ensure that every opportunity for development is given to the boy, stimulated me to wonder just what can be discovered through movement observation with such young children, and whether such a request for help could be accepted.

"It is quite clear that for normally developed children, the best movement help which can be given in order to ensure the continued growth and expansion of all round capacities both personal and social is the educationally applied art of movement as is already taken in many schools. It is not desirable to stress or develop one aspect of movement to the detriment of others, nor is it necessary to assess each child in a detailed analytical way. It is sufficient for the teacher to provide the scope and opportunity for an all-round movement development in a creative way. Indeed, it might be a danger that too much stress on an analytical outlook would reduce the spontaneity of the teacher. She should simply be able to observe and know the children whom she teaches, so that any special difficulties can be helped within the general lesson form, or daily activities of the class.

"I feel that the assessment and treatment of really maladjusted children is the work for a specialist, and cannot be expected of the general class teacher, unless he or she is specially trained and given extra time for this work. What may be possible is that certain help in the form of suggested movement or general treatment might be offered by the specialist who could then be greatly assisted by some of the treatment being carried out by a person familiar to the child."

"With this aim in view, I first decided that it was essential to become familiar with the detailed movement characteristics of 'normal' children, so that I had some means of comparing and assessing what was normal or abnormal. This in fact turned out to be much easier than I had anticipated. I arranged to go to a boys' primary school, where the Headmaster was most helpful in providing me with opportunities to observe the boys in whatever circumstances I chose. I took with me someone to teach the boys, and the first task was to evolve a suitable lesson form which would, in the thirty minutes which we gave ourselves, stimulate a sufficiently varied movement response from the boys, so that I could observe (and assess later) their present characteristics."

The ultimate lesson form which was evolved included ideas for stimulating all the different aspects of movement : efforts and shapes, working with a partner, leading a group and following the lead of others, rhythmical sequences and dramatic situations. It took a few weeks of experimenting until the best outline form of such a lesson was reached, and even so, it had obviously to be adapted to the age of the children, as well as to their responses. Such stimulation of the class is in itself a skilled task of teaching ; no mechanical routine is possible. "Sometimes suggestions were thrown out to the children without explanation or demonstration, sometimes a definite working on a particular movement was made, sometimes demonstration given and so on. This is the skill of the person taking the class to balance

these various teaching approaches in the right place and at the right time."

"At first, the classes were too long, so that some of the observations which I made would not necessarily be valid, as a natural falling off in interest after about half an hour's concentrated work would influence the normal reactions of the children. It is also essential that each group of children has, if not a completely new approach from the teacher, then an adaptation to its needs. It is obviously quite different taking first and fourth year groups, and groups with a higher compared with a lower intelligence average."

"To the Headmaster, I tried to give in words an account of the boys whom I had observed, as a basis for discussion. The first classes were poor and insufficiently developed, so that although we in fact discussed every boy taken, I recorded in words only for those boys seen in the later and better formulated classes, fifty boys in all. I observed always four boys during a class, but we actually had a group of ten each time. The four chosen were suggested by the Headmaster as a good cross-section between well-adjusted, helpful, nuisance, insecure, shy, aggressive, and so on, from the school's point of view, having regard to their whole background. I deliberately did not know anything of the chosen boys, so that I had no preconceived ideas or prejudices."

"Already by the first class, where the boys are from seven to eight years old, movement and therefore mental and emotional inhibitions, stresses, and deficiencies are seen in some boys ; things like lack of resiliency and body flexibility, cramp and boundness in certain regions of the body, particularly shoulders ; narrowness and restriction in ability of a boy to extend his body in space and many other similar bodily defects. These things I discriminate from movement characteristics which have not yet developed and from the natural (and desirable) different stresses in different people."

The following comments are taken from the report to the Headmaster (which was incorporated into the general report). One of the difficulties which I encountered was to explain in words what we observe in movement and write down in the special movement shorthand which is designed for the purpose. None of the staff at this school had any knowledge of our movement terms (or of the work at all in education) so that the reports are as far as possible in everyday language. This often detracts from the exactness of the report, sometimes by a slight alteration of the meaning, and frequently I had to leave out entirely the subtleties which were shown in the movement phrases. In working between ourselves, we find always that we discuss the direct movement happenings, responses and combinations, and try to avoid the pitfalls of translating into words.

I give now some examples from the portraits which were made. All were interesting in different ways, and I chose those where contrasting elements were obvious. It is not possible to print the movement observations themselves, as the symbols are quite complicated from the printing point of view, so this has been left out, and only the word pictures given.

**A. Age 11 Years 3 Months**

"Has good body control and co-ordination, and an easy flow of movement, with the exception of an occasional (?) tension in the shoulders, causing a certain restriction and inhibition in movements. (Is he shy, or lacking in confidence sometimes?) He can easily get over-excited and absorbed in his own doing, in which case he forgets others, even pushes them out of his way. When given responsibility he responds with confidence and he is most considerate when leading others. He has a good manual ability, and probably enjoys making things.

" He enjoys dramatic work, and is completely absorbed in the character. He is able to express clearly and to hold to his own opinions. Willing to accept direction from others or to adapt to the needs of others. He is mentally very alert and adaptable."

Head's report (after discussion also with staff) :

" He is rather over-assertive than shy as seen in report above of relationship with others. We agree on all other aspects of the report. Boy very alert mentally. I.Q. 125. Eng. 121. Arith 124."

**B. Aged 10 Years 7 Months**

" He has a shy and hesitant nature, withholding from some activities and cautious. He is still insecure enough to welcome directions from others, and has not the confidence to take the initiative himself. His caution and hesitation make him slow to make contacts and adaptations. Lacks determination to carry out his own ideas; withdraws into himself when confronted with difficulties. There is excessive tension in his shoulder and top of spine region, and a narrowing of the body in a protective way.

He shows no obvious ability in practical work; his lack of intention limits his ability to achieve results. He showed a surprising enjoyment of leaping and jumping and enjoyed time rhythmical sequences. His present weakness and tentativeness covers a rich store of intuitive understanding. Needs confidence developing."

Head's report : " Excellent report. Has no persistent effort ; lacks confidence ; shirks physical training and games whenever possible ; practical work poor ; gives up easily. I.Q. 105. Eng. 104. Arith. 108."

(It is obvious that this boy would respond to a more imaginative and rhythmical approach than the conventional P.T. or games which frighten him. Movement and dance as well as dramatic experience would help him to gain confidence, as he showed quite surprising movement abilities when physical prowess was not stressed).

**C. Aged 11**

"His heavy body makes certain limitations in his movements: he lacks resiliency and rhythm, enjoys rather rolling and flopping about. He has a certain weakness and lack of determination in things he thinks he cannot do. In mental work he would be happier. He enjoys working with other people if he can lead them, and if not likes to create an impression. His small degree of determination, however, means that his leading becomes vague and loses its purpose : he is more con-

cerned with the idea than with the carrying out. Can dictate and insist upon someone doing what he says ! Cannot be bothered to follow and play a subordinate part. He is no doubt at his best when working alone or in equal relationship with one other. He is a very imaginative boy, enjoys creating a dramatic situation where he can become absorbed in a mood or feeling. Not a boy of mechanical or practical action. (He even mimed hitting his own finger, which he would surely do if he handled a hammer in that way !) Although not without an average mental ability, he approaches work rather through a liking or disliking. Needs to have his imagination captured to work best."

Head's remarks : " Very likeable boy. Will do anything to be popular ; tends to show off. Can be easily led if interested. No manual ability at all. Imaginative and reads a great deal. I.Q. 108. Eng. 113. Arith 107."

**D. Aged 10 Years 7 Months**

"Hunched shoulders (? some physical defect) affect breathing which is often laboured. He enjoyed moving and took the whole class seriously. He tried to take part in all activities, enjoying the physical stress, and unable to cope when it came to mental or intellectual decisions. Has a mechanical repetitive attitude, and is not able to cope with real rhythmic variety or space and shape qualities. Probably little gift in constructing or making things : cannot estimate or plan clearly. Repetitive routine actions give him an active pleasure ; no desire for original or creative expression."

Head's comment : " Has had asthma at eight and nine years old, and lots of illnesses on and off. Hopeless at constructing or making with materials : no co-ordination in handling objects. Pleasant boy. No desire for responsibility and avoids it. Uncreative. I.Q. 94. Eng. 88. Arith. 86."

**E. Aged 9 Years 11 Months**

" Has a restraint and shyness which is carried through to a body stiffness and lack of decisive control. He usually reacts with a hesitation and slight pause. Finds it difficult to stick by himself to a decision once made, so that any result can be achieved. Lacks elevation and ease of body movement, and his emotional insecurity limits his actions. He shrinks from any attempt to lead or inspire order : afraid of doing the wrong thing. Does not seem to have manual or mechanical gifts, though there is a slight indication that such gifts may develop when he is in more familiar surroundings. He has powers of intuitive discrimination which are latent at present and upon which he has no confidence to rely."

Head's comment : " Very good summing up of this boy. He is diffident, reluctant and lacking in decision ; dithers about. Average I.Q."

**F. Aged 9 Years 6 Months**

"Has a high degree of personal initiative; quick reactions and likes to make his own decisions. Has a body stiffness which limits his easy contacts with others ; he is not confident in leading others but could become dominatingly insistent in directing someone weaker than himself. Can work independently, and in reacting to a partner, and is

willing to follow the lead of others. Somewhat doubtful about dramatising and characterising, and loses concentration. (This may have been the fault of the lesson in this particular case). He is alert and quick, lacking rhythmical powers, and has not yet mastered his reactions to people. A bit isolated, yet obviously wanting contact with others. Miming of actions held no interest for him."

Head's comment : " Alert, but cannot always put his ideas into action, except in games. Bodily agile and co-ordination good. Wants to lead others, but not good at this. Friendly in school where he feels secure, but has been given too much responsibility at home too young."

(The discrepancy between the pure bodily ability which this boy uses adequately in games, and the stiffness reported above is an interesting contrast, showing that the stiffness is much more an inner attitude reflecting on the bodily action, when asked to undertake anything of an expressive nature).

**G. Aged 8 Years 10 Months**

"Physically tall, energetic and alert. Pokes his head forward in an eager, enthusiastic way. Enjoys moving in large way, rolling, jumping. Resilient. Has a quick reaction, and an audacity in taking the initiative. He is bodily very able, and persistent enough to make his opinions felt. Can lead others with variety and interest, and is alert and observant, and quite willing to follow and co-operate with others. Obviously appreciates fair play. He can do manual rather than intellectual activities, though better in a large way than dealing with small intricate movements. Has a strong will power, and enjoys dramatic work. Likes to be in command : even pushes others out of the way in excitement and eagerness. Has a matter-of-fact and down to earth attitude. Probably not so gifted on the creative and imaginative side. No doubt good games player."

Head's report agrees : Assertive boy. Cannot resist taking risks. Not great mental ability, but will do well by self-assertion. Not creative. Works well with others."

This next example is of a boy who took part in the ordinary way with the others in his group, and it was not until after the discussion with the Headmaster that I learned he had been referred to the Educational Psychologist for advice the year before. He has a very poor home back-ground. I.Q. 91. This report was written before I knew this, though there was no doubt of his difficulties to fit into the group from the very beginning of the class. (In this case I had to use many movement expressions, as everyday words seemed inadequate).

**H. Aged 9 Years**

"Showed throughout the lesson an excessively strong emotional bias, and an almost complete lack of reality. In movement terms, he had a neutral flow content in his movements, and an unrelatedness, or an occasional bold or free flow, usually combined with weight but sometimes with directness. He had a repetitive and habitual facial twitch. At the beginning of the class, he listened to the teacher's instructions, then watched others to see their response. He has a very short ability

to concentrate. Quite soon he did not listen at all, and he is quite unable to work with a partner. Concentration on a practical action is almost nil. Likes turning movements. Of course he is not able to take part in any group activity in any capacity. He wanders off in a day dream.

" What he enjoyed and was most absorbed in was his natural (and over-stressed) state of mind: miming of a dreamy darkness, though with him it was very real. During explanations of the story, he crept up close to the teacher, and gazed at her with a blank expression but certainly took in enough to know what was expected of him. In direct contrast to most of the other boys of his age, who were alert and active, he refused to open his eyes, and continued to feel around his chosen corner of the room, completely absorbed. When approached by the teacher, and broken away from this, he asked : " Can't we do closed eyes again ?", an almost completely opposite reaction to the other boys.

"He refused to play with another boy, refused to take a direct order and ran to the teacher, "I'm not going to do that." He was completely isolated and concerned with his own feelings, unaware of others and pushed to the front of the group, and could easily turn viciously on any other boy if something displeased him. He worked completely from his likes and dislikes, and rarely used the reasoning power which he had, so dominated was he by his feelings. From this short class, it appears that this boy is very maladjusted to his life, and unable to cope with the normal healthy relationships with other boys. He is ruled by his own emotional instability and turns away from the practical and concrete world into a dream fantasy of his own ; he is controlled from his unconscious fears and upheavals, and can only express himself in withdrawal or sudden aggression. He lacks sensitivity of the difference between strength and lightness, has a mechanical sense of time only, as though spell-bound by his inner world."

The Head's report agreed completely, and gave many details of the boy's difficulties, which they were trying to help within the framework of the school. " He is generous; needs a great deal of understanding; makes no attempt to do his school work; causes many disturbances with other boys; unco-operative in organised games, and is absorbed by fairy stories."

" It may very rightly be said that the foregoing remarks could have been made by any teacher knowing the child over a period of time. The knowledge (however incomplete) which is written here, is, however, obtained over a period of about thirty minutes, and during that time four boys were studied. In all, say an average meeting of about ten minutes. All the observations which are originally made are in terms of movement happenings and phrases, so that it is clear within the whole range of movement possibilities,

(a) where a certain movement combination is stressed and used excessively, and not balanced by its natural resilient opposite.
(b) where some movement qualities have been eliminated or repressed.

As we have found that mental and emotional states of mind, as well as physical abilities, are revealed in movement, so I believe that movement training and experience *can help* :—

(a) to retain an all-round development of the child's growing personality,

(b) (in cases where disorder and lack of balance are already shown) to readjust the disorder.

This distinguishes very clearly between the two very different uses of the Art of Movement for children :

(a) educational (which is the usual movement lesson in schools),

(b) therapeutic (which is specialised and highly skilled movement treatment not taken in the general class).

"In undertaking such specialised investigations into the difficulties of maladjusted children, the value of having evolved a suitable lesson test for normally developed and balanced children is obvious. It then becomes possible to make certain comparisons between the reactions made by the maladjusted and the normally adjusted child."

Following this investigation, I was fortunate enough to go to a residential home for maladjusted children from five to fifteen years. This was again a most interesting experience, and as a result of the investigation work, the supervisor and the psychologist were impressed with the possibilities for treatment which movement and dance held, so that a request for regular treatment classes for the children was made. This demand has been met by a movement rehabilitation worker who is experienced in this field of work. The investigations into the movement characteristics of maladjusted chlidren are going on now.

MARION NORTH.

## MOVEMENT IN A JUNIOR GIRLS' SCHOOL

*The following are the impressions of the Headmistress, of a class teacher, and of the children themselves.*

### The Headmistress

"I am a fanatic and proud of it." What is my fanaticism ? Merely the unshakeable conviction that Mr. Laban's inspired "Art of Movement" was the creator of the happy, exciting, adventurous school which I left in July, 1955.

Whatever its earlier surroundings may have been, it is a recognised fact that this school is now in one of the meanest districts in London. Row upon row of derelict, condemned houses line the streets. The majority are ill-lit, ill-ventilated, damp and deplorably overcrowded. They offer no amenities, create no home life, harbour numerous undesirable characters including gangsters, burglars, gamblers and drunkards. One street boasts three 'houses of immorality', and two murders have recently taken place within a stone's throw of the school itself.

From these hovels the majority of our children are drawn. More than half come from "divided homes", the "other man" or the "other woman" being the child's only security, means of affection or love, and power of control. Few children have a room of their own, many sleep

five or six in a room, and numbers have no bed, except the floor. Running water is rare but television common. Life is indeed restricted and it is little wonder that physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually these girls are rigid and taut.

Fortunately when I first went to the school in 1952 I knew my district, realised the children's academic limitations and their social frustrations but was equally aware of their needs, their capabilities, their loyalty and above all their outstanding imagination. Thrusting aside all advice of 'well-wishers' to 'go slowly,' I was convinced that in one aspect I must act and act immediately.

I found a good junior girls' school, well organised, well equipped, quiet, but oh, so lifeless ! Physical Education was almost non-existent. Certainly lessons were held regularly in the large airy hall but the body, its beauty, its power, its creative ability was hidden under cardigans, shoes and formal exercises. I insisted that every child strip and that a daily lesson be held either in the playground or hall. The local Physical Education Organiser spoke to the teachers and took some movement-classes. She planted the seed and in no time it grew. The children became body conscious. Instead of walking sedately they skipped and very soon they danced. Space was theirs and they used it. Classrooms were unlocked, empty rooms made available at lunch time and play times. Corridors, halls, playgrounds all became now part of their world in which to move. Stories, poems, art, drama, music took up more and more of their day and these in turn wove themselves into their magic power of moving. The girls became alive, they were excited and keen, eager to show others what they themselves had discovered. The former tired boredom and restlessness gradually changed into an alert, sensitive habit of listening. Gramophone records were an obvious source of delight and here the imagination, always so acute, interpreted themes first as solo creations, then with partners and as confidence was gained and community needs realised, groups varying in size displayed vital, detailed pictures. Not only in action but in their drama and art especially and more slowly into written work there came a vivid feeling of colour and joy. They talked freely and in a lively friendly manner with all. They developed an almost unnatural poise in children so young.

Older members of the staff ventured bravely with the girls and when three younger teachers were appointed it was noticeable how through their experimenting in this work, they lost much of their diffidence, worked as a team, and recognised the school as a large family rather than isolated groups of thirty or forty children each working with one teacher in charge.

Indeed it was difficult at times to be sure which teacher or which class was using the hall. Eight-year-olds mixed with ten-year-olds, nine-year-olds partnered eleven-year-olds. The fourth year teacher was frisking round while the first year teacher played on the piano or invited the large audience to be gentle or strong, bold or weak. It was indeed one community. School was certainly an adventure where young and old were each learning of the other and each sharing new experiences. The world was ours and we used it

It has been said frequently "There is no education without books." I would go a step further and say "There is no education without movement."

If I could possibly pass on some of my own faith in this work, some of my sure belief that with this work done in a true spirit in a school there need be no streaming, there will be no talk of a nervous child, social barriers will be knocked down, absenteeism lessened and experience gained, then I will have shown a very little gratitude to Mr. Laban and his group of faithful exponents of the wonderful art of movement.

E. Morpurgo.

**A Class Teacher**

I have often thought of too great feeling and extreme sensitivity as almost a form of maladjustment. The artist can control his feeling and use its strength through every hair of his artist's brush; the singer can capture new sounds through the depths of his voice; the pianist with his fingers can caress the dead notes of the piano into warm life ; the writer can use words to recapture beauty or recreate personality ; the ballet dancer can give voice through her movements to stories of life down the ages. But there is still feeling that cannot escape into any of these channels.

Modern Dance can catch up and use this feeling, this sensitivity, which is present in most children. It can bring form and beauty into bodies that may not be finely chiselled with the craftsman's tool, not shapely moulded by the potter's wheel. It always gives me a thrill to watch children express strength and lightness in such a variety of free movements ; to reveal spaciousness and confinement in one change of position ; to portray the different textures as shown by the artist's brush so delicately by every muscle in the body. Sometimes the children have laughed at me as I stood with eyes of wonderment wondering how their bodies could be so transformed to express a unit of thought. To watch each child without set exercise create her own movements of balance, stretch or twist is a real delight. Great control of body is achieved and a great knowledge derived of the possibilities of each individual body.

Apart from the great physical gains and opportunities for creative work there are the chances for co-operative work which are so beneficial. Working in groups without music and often without any given rhythm gives a chance for leadership and team work.

Looking back over the many different types of physical work I have done in the past thirty years I think Modern Dance has given me the most satisfaction in regard to my personal pleasure and my relationship with the children. I feel it is akin to free writing—the tools are provided, but the results are personal results. It is the opportunity to provide scope for different personalities that is important, I am sure, and I think it must be good for an individual to be able to give vent to internal thought and feelings through the medium of movement.

J. Clifford.

**THE CHILDREN (Average age 10 years)**

"I like Modern Dance with a partner. It is intresting to find how many parts of the body you can move. You can stretch right up and twist around. You can walk stiff and straight like a toy soilder. You can shake your hands and feet till you think there coming off. You can see how far you can leap. Sometimes you nearly touch the celling when you jump in the air. I like dancing to records best of all. I like Modern Dance better than games."

"Up and up we go as we jump
Then through the air we fly
And land with a bump
Get into twos the teacher says
Then we all dance as the record plays
Twist and curve up and down
Down to the ground and round and round
Clang goes the cymbals and slowly we move
Someone stumbles as they fall in a groove."

"The record I like best is Swan Lake, I like the rushin Sailors dance but it is a bit fast and it makes me feel tired. The movement I like best is the sustaine becase it dos not make you tired. I only like doing movemant by myself becase when you do it with a group you have to copy some one else and I like doing my on my own, it is much better then coping. You can do all sorts of things like stretching, continuous, straight curve twist and all sorts of lovly thing. I like Modern Dance best of all. And I like the records as well."

"I have enjoyed doing the Modern Dance. What I like doing best is stretching in every way, and I like twisting and curving, I like doing continuous movement. I also like working alone and with a partner and with records. When you are with a group you can make a story up with imaginary characters. I like every noise to dance with, like the drum the cymbals the records and I even like the piano. In Modern Dance you can get exercises and run about and shake yourself to get loose. If you are not loose you cannot do much. I love Modern Dance very very much."

"In dancing when we have a lesson the thing I like best is a curved movement it seems to loosen the body. I like the quick broken movement too. When I come in from a lesson I feel so fresh. I like the dancing a lot better than games. Of a night-time I do summer-salt because I feel dull. I like the record best of the music. When the wireless is on I dance to it and after I feel very well. There are many differend ways to stretch up and down, back, forwards, side to side, and all so many ways."

## FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES

MODERN DANCE HOLIDAY COURSES. The summer vacation course will be held from August 20th—31st at Ashridge (the Bonar Law Memorial College), Berkhamstead, Herts. Further particulars and application form may be obtained from the Hon. Secretary, Mrs. E. Logan, The Bothy, Woolley, near Wakefield, Yorks.

REFRESHER COURSE FOR PROFESSIONAL MEMBERS This will be held during the week-end of October 5th—7th, 1956, at Lilleshall Hall, Staffordshire. Application forms will be sent to all professional members at a later date. The course is open to those who wish to apply for professional membership. Intending applicants should send a completed application form (for professional membership) to the Secretaries, by July 31st, 1956.



THE DANCE MART
Books on the